



DALLAS SIERRA CLUB THE COMPASS

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Photo by James Wilson

Taos Bus Trip - Come Play in the Snow

Article on Page 3

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Intervening in our Dirty Energy Addiction

Our State is addicted to dirty energy. It's polluting the air, filling the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, and turning Texas into an asthmatic runner in the race to seize the prime economic opportunities of the clean energy economy.

It's time to do an intervention!

Fortunately, the Sierra Club has a 12-Step plan to address this addiction, and we're taking it to the 81st Legislature. The Lone Star Chapter's energy committee is mobilizing members around the state to support the Club's plan to increase efficiency, generate more renewable energy, and prepare for coming regulation of carbon dioxide and other gases that cause global warming.

The plan, "Cool Texas", available on the Chapter website at <http://texas.sierraclub.org/conservation/energy.asp>, is the Chapter's energy policy Big Book for this session, the roadmap for restoring rational thinking.

The Legislature is poised to build on last session's landmark energy efficiency bill with increased steps to a clean energy economy. The Club seeks to:

- Increase the amount of projected load growth that utilities must satisfy through efficiency;
- Fund low-income efficiency programs for existing and new homes;
- Adopt efficiency standards for appliances not yet covered (like pool pumps);

- Adopt higher efficiency standards for new buildings, following the lead that cities like Dallas and Houston have recently set; and
- Expand funding for the LoanSTAR program to perform efficiency retrofits on public buildings.

Increasing our state's renewable energy portfolio and helping other technologies achieve the same success we've seen with wind is a priority. We're asking the Legislature to:

- Require utilities to include a certain amount of on-site renewable energy in their portfolios;
- Create a Renewable Portfolio Standard specifically for solar, similar to the one that sparked the wind industry's growth; and
- Create a renewable energy storage portfolio standard to help integrate more wind and solar power into the grid and make Texas a leader in the development of this critical technology.

The Chapter is also asking the State to establish a carbon emissions inventory; update the air permitting process for electric generation plants; create a Clean Energy Fund to promote research & development in emerging energy technologies; and adopt green fleet vehicle requirements for public entities to help Texas develop a vehicle-to-grid electric market.

With the help of the Texas Legislature, our rehab patient will be well on the way to a clean energy future by next

summer, but the Club needs your help to make this recovery happen. We need you in Austin on Feb. 17-18 for our Clean Energy/Green Jobs conference and Lobby Day. We'll train you on the evening of Feb. 17 for meetings that you'll have with legislators and staff during the day on the 18th. Van Jones, founder of Green for All (www.greenforall.org) and an inspirational voice in the movement to create green-collar jobs, will be a featured speaker on the 18th. You won't want to miss him!

We also need members to schedule meetings throughout the session at their Legislators' local offices. And we're supporting the Re-Energize Texas Student Summit at the Capitol on March 28-30. Let your own students know that this is a great opportunity to raise their voices for their own clean energy future, and come down with them to show your support!

This is no time to sit on the sidelines and wish the addict would clean up its act. Get involved in our intervention! Contact me and I'll let you know just what you can do.

Ann Drumm
Lone Star Chapter Energy Chair
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Solar Is Suddenly Practical

By Terry Jensen

Overnight, installing solar energy has not only become practical, it also seems to be a reasonable investment.

Why?

If you live in the Oncor service area and install grid-direct solar photovoltaic, Oncor will pay up to \$2.46 per watt for residential customers to install a solar electric system up to 10 kilowatts (kW).

Added to the 30% tax credit from the federal government, making electricity on your own roof suddenly looks pretty good.

Cost for Solar

Let's start with an example. If you install \$24,500 of solar PV, you will receive a tax credit of \$7,350 and an Oncor rebate of \$7,380. The cost of your PV installation will be \$9,770. To me, that is quite practical.

It does not matter if you buy your electricity from Reliant, TXU, Green Mountain, etc., as long as you are in the Oncor area and attach your system to the Oncor grid.

You can not get the rebate from Oncor if you are outside their delivery area. You can still get the 30% federal tax credit, of course.

Design to Your Budget

A solar system can be added in stages. It does not have to be done all at once so it can be designed to fit your budget. Think of it as a multi-year project that approaches the problem from two directions: making your home as energy-efficient as possible to allow you to use fewer PV panels, while not adding more solar energy than you ultimately need. A good plan is:

- Add a small amount of solar.
- Work on the energy-efficiency of your home.

- Add some more solar.
- Finish making your home energy-efficient.
- Follow your electricity consumption through a summer or even longer.
- Add the final solar.

Therefore, you can decide on a budget and timeline, then work backwards until you have a project plan

There Is a Catch...

That catch is TIME.

1. Oncor has only allotted \$4,000,000 per year (for four years) to this rebate program. Although that sounds like a sizable amount of money, Oncor has 3,000,000 customers vying for a place at the table.
2. The money will be allotted by reservation with a certified installer.
3. Oncor says reservations for the rebate can be made as early as January 1, 2009.
4. The money will almost certainly be gone very quickly in 2009.

Caveat

As of press time, this has not been announced to the general public so there may be some changes in Oncor's final plan. However, I feel Sierra Club members are some of the most likely people to purchase solar energy for their homes. I think we deserve a piece of the pie and the advance notice for those who wish to take advantage of the opportunity.

All in all, a perfect holiday gift, both for those who add solar energy to their homes and for planet earth.

Texas Needs You! Make your voice heard!

For much of the last year we've been focused on getting the right people elected. The job doesn't end there. We now need to make sure that they do for the environment what we need them to do. The Texas legislature starts its biennial session in January. With some wins we made this year we have the best chance we've had in years of passing some good environmental legislation, and not just trying to keep bad legislation from getting passed.

We're looking for Sierrans in each state house district who are willing to contact their State Representative and State Senator about environmental issues and legislation. You can do as

little or as much as you want. The point is to do SOMETHING! What you do can range from personally meeting with your representative early in the session to let your general interests and concerns be known, to just making a call or letter late in the session about a specific bill. You need not be an expert – we'll supply all the background and talking points you need. If you're interested in helping out please contact Conservation Committee Co-chairs Mike Rawlins (mikerawlins@dallassierraclub.org) or Robin Sowton (robin@dallassierraclub.org). If we don't hear from you we may be contacting some of you personally, so please be ready to help out if you hear from us!



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Submissions: Article and photograph submissions are always welcome. Please send submissions by the deadlines given in the General Calendar. Send submissions to the newsletter editor at the e-mail address listed on the back fold.

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New Reactors Planned for Comanche Peak

Luminant recently announced that the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission has accepted for review, the company's application for a license to build and operate two advanced pressurized water reactors at the Comanche Peak site in Texas.

According to a meeting in Fort Worth in December sponsored by Public Citizen and Seed Coalition, the projected cost of this plant is 22 billion dollars. The first nuclear electric plant was projected to cost 1 billion dollars. With overruns, it actually cost 12 billion dollars.

Without overruns, a nuclear plant costing 22 billion dollars will give our electric rates a swift upward kick.

What will it will do with overruns? North Texas will have the highest electricity rates in the country. And it will leave hundreds of generations after us with our toxic waste to store.

What are we thinking?

12 Steps the State of Texas and Governor Perry can take next Legislative Session to increase energy efficiency, on-site and off-site renewables:

1. Establish a carbon emissions inventory, reporting system and action plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in Texas;
2. Update our air permitting standards so that newly proposed plants must look at best available control technology and maximum achievable control technology, and begin to address carbon dioxide emissions;
3. Increase utility funded efficiency programs to 50 percent of load and peak growth by 2015 and 1500 MWs by 2020;
4. Create a parallel on-site renewable energy program at transmission and distribution utilities of 2,000 MWs by 2020;
5. Create a Solar Renewable Portfolio Standard of 4,000 MWs by 2020 which could be met by utility-scale solar or contracting with or purchasing on-site solar installations;
6. Create a new Renewable Energy Storage Portfolio Standard of 4,000 MWs by 2020;
7. Fund the low-income weatherization programs for existing homes through the Systems Benefit Fund.
8. Create state appliance standards for six appliances;
9. Adopt more efficient building standards, including an Advanced Energy Building Program for Public Buildings.
10. Expand the Texas Loan Star Program to \$300 million and allow energy efficiency loans to electric cooperatives and municipalities;
11. Create a Clean Energy Fund to develop new technologies like energy storage.
12. Adopt Green Fleet requirements for public entities which include plug-in hybrids so that Texas can begin to develop a vehicle-to-grid electric market.

For the full 12-Step Plan, visit <http://texas.sierraclub.org/conservation/coolTexasreport.pdf>

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

A NEW YEAR – A NEW OPPORTUNITY

It's a new year and for all lovers of the environment, it's a new lease on life. The political winds have blown in a favorable direction and the celebration has been well earned by thousands of volunteers whose dedication to green candidates cannot be overlooked. We all owe these super-stars a huge thank you.

As the New Year starts, we are presented with the opportunity to undo some bad legislation and rule making, but most importantly, a chance to move toward real solutions to real problems.

At least for a while, we have the nation's attention with climate change and energy issues. Don't miss this opportunity to go really green. The winds may change when we least expect it and the planet can least afford it.

Your Dallas Chair

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

January

Short Program: Help the Sierra Club get its Legislative Agenda Passed

The 81st Texas Legislature is in session, and the Sierra Club needs your help to get its legislative agenda passed! It includes higher standards in building energy efficiency; an increase in the renewable portfolio standard to help technologies like solar and geothermal take off; more efficient appliance standards; low-interest loans for energy efficiency retrofits in schools and other public buildings; and more. It's an ambitious agenda, and we need your help! Hear all about it from Ann Drumm, Lone Star Chapter Energy Chair, who will also tell you about our Lobby Day in February and how you can help turn Texas into the nation's clean energy leader.

Main Program: Isle Royale National Park Wilderness is its strength, people are only temporary.

We invite you to start off the New Year by joining us for our January program when fellow Sierran Liz Wheelan takes us on a photographic journey of her recent trips backpacking over 100 miles of Isle Royale National Park (IRNP). This remote island in Lake Superior, miles north of the upper peninsula of Michigan, is accessible only by ferry or sea plane and is open to visitors only early summer to mid fall. It has the highest number of repeat visitors and longest average stay per person of any National Park. The Island has fewer visitors in a year than Yellowstone in a day, yet the Island's per acre backcountry use is the highest of all National Parks in the United States. All this while being the only national park in the country to close down completely (mid October - April).



What keeps backpackers, paddlers, researchers and even short-term visitors coming back so often and for so many days? It's hard to put into words the beauty, strength and challenges offered by this Island. It provides flora and fauna in a rare setting of wind, waves and forests. Hikers may encounter everything from slugs to moose, and be lulled to sleep by the cry of wolves and awaken to the joyful sounds of loons. Backpackers encounter level serene paths to steep up-and-down ridge trails. The entire island was designated an International Biosphere in 1981 and in 2008 researchers and volunteers gathered to celebrate 50 continuous years of the Island's Wolf/Moose Study. This Ecological Study of Wolves is the longest running large mammal predator-prey study on earth.

There is a secluded wonder of the Island, a roadless, almost timeless place, forever preserved in the stormy northwest corner of Lake Superior. Visitors develop a reverence for "her" and consider it a privilege to experience such pristine wilderness. We hope you will mark your calendars so you don't miss this program. Maybe it will inspire you to plan your own journey into the wilderness.

February

Trinity River Audubon Center

Come to the Dallas Sierra Club's February meeting to learn all about the new Audubon Center in the Great Trinity Forest. (This program was scheduled for last November, but due to a scheduling conflict, we have moved it to February.)

At 6,000 acres, the Great Trinity Forest is the largest urban hardwood forest in the United States. The Great Trinity Forest supports a diverse community of plant and animal species and contains a unique mixture of bottomland hardwoods, aquatic and wetland systems and grasslands. The Trinity River Audubon Center, which opened a few months ago, will serve as the gateway to explore these amazing resources.

The Center, designed by architect Antoine Predock, 2006 AIA Gold Medalist, will provide direct access to a myriad of opportunities for the citizens of Dallas: nature viewing, hiking, picnicking, and canoeing.

GREEN RESEARCH

How green are Americans? Europeans shrink paper use

A recent study conducted by Harris Interactive found almost three quarters of Americans believe their personal actions are significant on the environment. In general though, the phrase "environmental sustainability" is not widely understood. Fifty eight percent have not heard the phrase used, while 42 percent have heard it.

Study authors then provided a definition of the phrase as "taking from the earth only what it can provide indefinitely, thus leaving future generations as much as we have access to ourselves." When giving this definition, 53 percent say they have done something to change their lifestyle to make it more environmentally sustainable.

Activities changers have taken are shown below:

- 30% No bottled water
- 47% Green household goods
- 49% Buying local food
- 73% Paying bills online
- 91% Recycling

Those who haven't changed their lifestyle cite a variety of reasons, including saying it won't make any difference (30%), forget until afterwards (22%), it's too expensive (20%), or they don't have the time (10%).

On a positive note, 67 percent of Americans say it will be possible for people to actually live an environmentally sustainable life, as opposed to the 22% who believe it will not be possible.

The paper industry's carbon footprint is estimated to be three times higher than the aviation industry. The European Environmental Paper Network launched a Shrink campaign to address the madness of over-consumption of paper. Key elements included:

- Changing default margins
- Using a smaller font and smaller images
- Using thinner paper
- Printing/copying on both sides of paper (By reducing the weight of ATM receipt paper, Bank of America saved an estimated \$500,000 annually plus added savings from lower storage, handling and transportation, and labor costs.)

As simple a thing as adding a line to emails - "Before printing this e-mail, please consider the environment" - can have a positive effect.

Source: Quirk's Marketing Research Review August 2008

COME PLAY in the SNOW!

ANNUAL TAOS BUS TRIP - February 5th - 9th

Time to dust off your parka - we're heading back to enjoy the special winter beauty of Taos, New Mexico on our annual winter bus trip. Join us for a long weekend filled with several fun activities including your choice of skiing, snowboarding, alpine snowshoeing, snow tubing, shopping, great food and more. Participants have their choice of staying in the lodge in Taos with hot tub or snowshoeing to a higher altitude to enjoy the cozy yurt. This trip is a great opportunity for anyone just beginning to experience the wonderful beauty of winter or for those wanting to expand their winter outdoor skills. New this year - a trip option for those wanting to improve your photography skills. Professional photographer and fellow Sierran James Wilson will guide us for a walk of picturesque areas of the Taos Plaza, lunch, then a ride south of town to Ranchos dos Taos and its famous Church.

Our convenient sleeper bus will leave Dallas early evening of February 5 and return early morning of February 9. Trip price includes transportation to/from Taos, the Taos Ski Valley, all trailheads and Ranchos dos Taos. Remember - reservations, trip choices and bus seating preferences are on a first come basis. This trip usually fills fast. This is a great time to ask Santa for a seat on this special sleigh to Taos! For complete trip write up and reservation information, please go to dallassierclub.org and click on the outings page. Still have questions - contact the bus leader at Lizwico@aol.com or 214.368.2306.



JAN 3 (SAT) NEW YEAR'S POTLUCK AND RECYCLE WHITE ELEPHANT PARTY Recycle those holiday gifts and other white elephants. Put them on the recycle table and grab something you had rather have. Bring a vegan dish to share. Vegan means plant-based with no dairy, eggs, meat, or fish. Bring a peace thought to share. 4:30 pm. RSVP not necessary. Just show up with food and hope for planet earth in the New Year at the Community Room, First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, East Fort Worth (almost Arlington), 76112. Terry at 817 545-0140. Coordinator: Terry Jensen 972 251-1532(W)

JAN 4 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY LUNCH Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, (817) 283-8228, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Organizer: Terry Jensen earth1@dfwnetmail.com

JAN 18 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY LUNCH Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 pm. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Veg, (972) 243-0507) 2330 Royal Lane, ste 900, Dallas 75229. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Organizers: Terry Jensen earth1@dfwnetmail.com and James Bisby 469-371-1938(H)

JAN 21 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING. Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch), at 6:30 PM. Bring your ideas for the Dallas Sierra Club Outings program. We will be planning local outings and bus trips. All outings leaders, future outings leaders, and interested Sierrans welcome. Ask Bill to be placed on the email list for an agenda. Contact: Bill Greer 972-964-1781(H) or wbgreer@verizon.net

JAN 24 (SAT) DAYHIKE ON THE CHISHOLM TRAIL IN PLANO Meet at 9:30AM in front of the Starbucks/Barnes & Noble (north side of 15th just west of US 75). We will walk 5 or 6 miles on a paved path. Bring water. No reservations, just show up. Optional restaurant afterwards. Leader: Judy Cato 972-238-5738(H)

FEB 1 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY LUNCH Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, (817) 283-8228,

3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Sierra table to left of door. Ask for group when you come in. Organizer: Terry Jensen earth1@dfwnetmail.com

FEB 5-9 (THU-MON) BUS TRIP TO TAOS, NM Come play in the snow! This annual trip to enjoy the winter beauty of northern New Mexico is one of our favorites. It offers hotel w/ hot tub or yurt accommodations, and several activity options including alpine snowshoeing, skiing, snowboarding, snowtubing, outdoor photography session around Taos and Ranchos dos Taos, and time to just relax and enjoy the shops, food and beauty of this scenic and historical town. Activity ratings range from easy to moderately strenuous. Trip includes transportation to/from Taos, Taos Ski Valley and trailheads. For complete write up with trip options, costs and reservations visit our Outings web site at this link: Outings (<http://texas.sierraclub.org/dallas/outings.asp>) . This trip fills up fast so sign up soon! Bus trip leader: Liz Wheelan 214-368-2306(H) or Lizwico@aol.com

FEB 15 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY LUNCH Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 pm. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Veg, (972) 243-0507) 2330 Royal Lane, ste 900, Dallas 75229. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Organizers: Terry Jensen earth1@dfwnetmail.com and James Bisby 469-371-1938(H)

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FEB 21 (SAT) GUIDED TOUR - DALLAS' LEED-CERTIFIED POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OPTIONAL DART AND LUNCH Please join us as we tour the Jack Evans Police Headquarters, Dallas' first building that's LEED-certified for energy and resource efficiency. Much more info come - stay tuned! All are welcome to participate;

you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to join us. Please RSVP by 2/16 to participate. ** Building Location: 1400 South Lamar St., Dallas ** Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

MAR 14 (SAT) ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE ON GREENVILLE AVE - 2ND ANNUAL DSC PARADE ENTRY The Dallas Sierra Club will be entering a conservation-themed/SC awareness entry into the 2009 parade scheduled for Saturday, March 14th. We are seeking volunteers to help (wo)man the blue containers

(two people per bin) along the parade route or just be part of the parade and walk along with the Sierra Club group. Total volunteer time would be about four hours beginning at 10:00 AM. The parade starts at 11:00 AM near Park Ln. and usually lasts a couple hours, after which, we can hang out to enjoy some of the festivities. To participate, please RSVP by 3/10 to the youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org email address. We'll follow up to everyone the week before the parade with an email that includes additional details. All are welcome to join in the fun! Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

HOW THE OUTING PROGRAM WORKS

Dallas Sierra Club Outings are open to members and non-members. Some trips may require special qualifications and capabilities. The leaders of Sierra Club outings are serving in a volunteer capacity and assume no responsibility above that of trip organizer. If you have a medical problem, it is your responsibility to inform the leader before the outing. Outing leaders are encouraged to participate in training and classes to increase their skills, but they are not paid professionals. They will assist you within their limitations. It is the responsibility of the participant to be aware of any personal limitations before going on an outing.

Radios and firearms are prohibited from all outings. Pets are not allowed unless specifically stated. All outings officially begin at the trail head or outing start point. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but may help coordinate ride sharing for energy conservation and to promote fellowship. All non-commercial transportation is the responsibility of the individual. Car-pooling

is SOLELY voluntary, but the costs are shared. The usual method of sharing transportation cost is for all riders in the car, including the driver, to divide the cost of transportation equally. Before leaving, be sure this or some other method is agreed upon. Reservations are necessary for outings unless otherwise noted in the outing description. To participate in an outing, contact the leader. The leader will decide if the trip you are interested in is suitable for you based on your capabilities and the demands of the trip. There is usually a limit to the number of people allowed on a given outing. If you must cancel, inform the leader as soon as possible so that someone else can go in your place. Please respect the wishes of your leader who has volunteered his / her free time to allow you to go on the trip of your choice. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in becoming a leader, contact either the Outings Chair or the appropriate Outings Committee Coordinator listed on the newsletter back page.

Notice: to receive the outings list monthly via email, visit www.dallassierraclub.org/subscribe

Young Sierran Events

JAN 14 (WED) YOUNG SIERRANS HH/DINNER - TO BE DETERMINED - ADDISON Please join us for our first social event of the year at the - check back later - in Addison on Wednesday, January 14th. Arrive anytime after 6:00 PM. Please RSVP by noon on 1/14 to the invitation or the youngsierrans[at]dallassierraclub.org email address so we have a rough estimate for seating. All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. We hope to see you there! ** Location: ** Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

JAN 27 (TUE) YOUNG SIERRANS HH/DINNER - TO BE DETERMINED - DALLAS Please join us for happy hour/dinner at the - check back later - in Dallas on Tuesday, January 17th. Arrive anytime after 6:00 PM. Please RSVP by noon on 1/27 to the invitation or the youngsierrans[at]dallassierraclub.org email address so we have a rough estimate for seating. All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. We hope to see you there! ** Location: ** Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

FEB 21 (SAT) GUIDED TOUR - DALLAS' LEED-CERTIFIED POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OPTIONAL DART AND LUNCH Please join us as we tour the Jack Evans Police Headquarters, Dallas' first building that's LEED-certified for energy and resource efficiency. See the listing on the "Trips/Outings" page for more details. All are welcome to participate; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to join us. Please RSVP by 2/16 to participate. Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

MAR 14 (SAT) ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE ON GREENVILLE AVE - 2ND ANNUAL DSC PARADE ENTRY The Dallas Sierra Club will be entering a conservation-themed/SC awareness entry into the 2009 parade scheduled for Saturday, March 14th. See the listing on the "Trips/Outings" page for more details. To participate, please RSVP by 3/10 to the youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org email address. We'll follow up to everyone the week before the parade with an email that includes additional details. All are welcome to join in the fun! Contact: Peter Wilson youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org

Mid-Suburban Sierra Club

The Mid-Suburban Sierra Club is a satellite group supported by both the Dallas and Fort Worth Sierra Club. It meets in the communities around DFW Airport.

Please join us and bring your friends to the following meetings:

Monday, January 26 - 7 pm. This will be an hour-long program on "Energy in 2009" presented by several different speakers. We will cover everything from what we might expect from the government (U.S. and Texas) for energy in the new year to an update on renewable energy for 2009, including information about the federal tax credits and the Onco rebates for solar energy.

Monday, February 23 - 7 pm. Kathryn Beer, lobbyist for The American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association, will explain both the sustainability and the mechanics of rainwater collection.

Both meetings are in the second floor community room in the Sunflower Shoppe (formerly Healthy Approach Market), 817 399-9100, 5100 State Hwy 121, Colleyville, 76034, located on the west side of the freeway between Hall-Johnson and Glade Roads. Exit Hall-Johnson and go south on the Hwy 121 access road. Turn right into the Sunflower parking lot immediately after passing the restaurants Rio Mambo and Mac's. Call Terry Jensen at 972 251-1532 for further information.

Service with a Smile

Sierra Club singles met recently with Ron Smith of the Plano Department of Parks and Recreation who described his efforts in getting the Oak Point Nature Preserve up and running. He has put out a call for volunteers who will clear new pathways along designated routes by removing large debris from the forest floor, including fallen tree limbs and flood debris, and pruning low-hanging branches -- just the sort of tasks Sierra Club service outings aim to accomplish.

We are also in contact with Volunteer Coordinator Dana Wilson at the brand new Trinity River Audubon Center in South Dallas. This is another facility that has opened only recently and is in need of committed naturalists and yeoman laborers to help clear paths and establish trails throughout the park. The Inner City Outings team has already led a group of teenagers on a service outing there; but there is plenty of work for adults to do there as well, so we plan to coordinate a service outing to help them out early in the New Year.

The Outings committee has resolved to reinvigorate the Dallas Group's service outing listings, so if one of your New Year's resolutions is to serve your community, look for service opportunities on the outings list this coming spring. And if you don't already have them, get Santa to deliver your very own hand tools (rakes, hand-held pruning clippers, two-handed limb shears, etc.) as well as work gloves -- ideal equipment for the well turned-out service outing volunteer.

Teresa Wilkin [teresawilkin@yahoo.com] has already started collecting names of those interested in keeping informed about service outing opportunities. Please send her your email address if you would like to be added to that list. And plan to have some fun and conviviality while getting your hands dirty in 2009!



Winter Mountain Camping and Hiking

By Kent Trulsson

The coming of winter need not end your mountain hiking and camping until next summer. Snowshoes can make the mountains accessible through the winter, provided that you equip yourself properly and learn a few specialized snow camping skills.

Clothing: The single biggest challenge of winter camping and hiking is staying both warm and dry. Mountain temperatures may vary from minus 20°F on a windy ridge at night to 50°F in a sheltered meadow on a sunny calm day. The even greater range of aerobic activity levels, from climbing a mountain on snowshoes, to sitting around camp eating dinner, demand a layered clothing system to precisely maintain the right degree of warmth. This cannot be achieved with a single heavy down jacket. Rather, you will need a number of thinner layers to allow continual, on-the-fly adjustment of your clothing to match the weather and your level of activity. The overarching goal is to stay just warm enough to be comfortable without breaking a sweat and accumulating moisture in your clothing. Perspiration will chill you quickly as soon as you stop working. Managing the moisture you generate is usually more important than repelling already frozen precipitation.

The outer layer should be a wind- and water-resistant (not waterproof) shell. Both pants and jacket should have full-length zippers to maximize ventilation when you are working hard and the temperatures are mild. Underarm pit zips on the jacket are a plus. Breathability is vital. In winter, soft shell fabrics usually work better than the standard hard shell rain jacket, GoreTex included. Middle insulation layers should be made of pile, polyester thermal fabrics, nylon covered synthetic fiberfill, or wool. Do not wear anything with cotton. You will need a range of fabric weights to fit all conditions. At night you may wear them all. During the day when you are working hard, you may need no insulation layer. Because down becomes ineffective when wet, down-filled insulating garments are best for night or other times when you are dry and sedentary. The inner-most layer should be underwear and long underwear with moisture wicking properties, such as Patagonia's Capilene fabric.

You should have several different weights of hats and gloves. These are the easiest part of the system to adjust while you are hiking. Layers are just as important for your extremities as they are for your core: a thin Capilene balaclava covered with a pile cap covered by the hood of a nylon shell, with a pile neck gaiter or face mask, covers the full range of conditions better than one thick down-filled hood. For your hands, have a choice of several weights of liner gloves, covered as needed by pile or synthetic fiberfill mittens, and finally with mitten shells when cold or glove shells when warm.

Always wear sunglasses or goggles. The high altitude and the great reflectivity of snow can quickly lead to snow-blindness (sun-burn of the eyes).

While hiking, constantly monitor your temperature: Am I too warm? Am I sweating? If so, unzip your jacket, take off a hat or glove layer, and if necessary, stop and take off an insulating layer. Am I too cold? Put on a layer, or zip up any openings. Stay dry, and you will ultimately stay warm.

Water: Dehydration can be serious problem in winter mountain camping and hiking. Snowshoeing in high altitudes requires heavy, open-mouth breathing of very dry air, resulting in high water loss. Carried water tends to freeze quickly, and replacement water must usually be melted from snow. Even when you are day hiking, carry a stove, fuel and pot to replenish drinking water. You will need a large melting pot (at least 2 liters in capacity) and a smaller snow-scoop pot. Start with a small amount of water in the bottom of the melting pot, and continue adding clean snow as it



Photo by Kent Trulsson

melts. Bring the water to a boil before using. Never use a stove in a closed tent. A stove with a wind screen and separate fuel canister is preferable to a burner mounted on top of a fuel canister. You will also need a flat surface to support the stove, so it does not melt into the snow. A 12" square piece of "peg-board" works well. White gas fuel is preferable to isobutane / propane, because it continues to work below zero, and is easier to pack in bulk. Plan on carrying about three times the fuel you would normally need for a summer trip, and spending about an hour a day just melting snow. To keep the water liquid between melting sessions, fill one-liter hard-plastic bottles with hot water and cover with thick foam insulating jackets. Store the bottles upside down, so the threaded lid does not freeze shut. Keep the bottles in as insulated a location as possible during the night.

Food and Cooking: There are few activities that require more caloric energy than winter mountain snowshoeing or cross-country skiing with a pack. Walking or skiing through deep snow uses much more energy than trail hiking, and maintaining body warmth in cold temperatures demands even more energy. Plan on increasing your food intake about 50% above a summer menu. This is not the place to diet! Choose lunch foods that can be eaten even if frozen. Even bars will freeze if you do not carry them inside your jacket. Keep lunch and snack stops short but frequent, so as not to get chilled. Dinner should include slower-digesting fats and proteins, as well as complex carbohydrates, which will continue to provide energy through the night. Consider hot drinks with every meal. Do not cook inside a tent. Besides being a fire danger and introducing unwanted water vapor inside the tent, the carbon monoxide produced by the burning stove can make high altitude breathing even harder, or even fill an enclosed tent. Instead, consider digging a cooking pit in the snow, with stoves protected from the wind in the center, surrounded by seating benches.

Tent, Sleeping Pads and Bag: A tent for winter mountain camping should have two walls (body plus covering fly) with no open screen sections in the body that cannot be zipped shut. (Wind can blow spindrift snow through insect screens, even when under the fly.) The tent frame should be a three or four pole dome design, with multiple supporting guy lines. Normal peg-style tent stakes do not work in snow.

Instead use 1" wide by 10" long snow stakes, or parachute-shaped nylon or V-shaped metal snow anchors that are buried in the snow. Select a tent location that is not under the snow-shedding line of large trees, but that is sheltered from strong winds. Level the tent site with a shovel, and thoroughly pack the snow down by tramping over it with your snowshoes. Also pack down a defined path between tents and to the designated cooking and latrine areas.

You will need two sleeping pads when camping on snow. The bottom pad should be ½" thick (minimum) full-length closed-cell foam, such as a RidgeRest pad. The upper pad should be a 1-1/2" thick minimum, full length self-inflating open-cell foam filled air mattress, such as a Thermarest. Do not try to get by with one pad—no matter how warm your sleeping bag, you will end up very cold. Do not try to use an air mattress without insulating fill. Bring two long webbing straps to tie the pads together. Your sleeping bag should be rated to the expected minimum temperature. Be careful not to breathe into the sleeping bag—the condensed moisture will quickly freeze inside the bag's insulation and degrade the insulation's effectiveness. For maximum warmth, consider wearing a balaclava or face-mask, as well as a pile hat. Change out of your hiking long underwear, which may be damp with sweat, into a dry set of sleeping underwear.

Weather and Snow Conditions: Finally, to stay safe, you must be aware of the present and forecast weather and snow conditions. When hiking after a heavy snowfall, stay away from steep slopes that could pose an avalanche danger. High winds can build unsupported cornices of snow on the down-wind side of ridge lines. Stay well back from the edge of these cornices. Sudden blizzard conditions can make it dangerous to hike. Use marked routes (or mark them yourself with flags) if there is any a chance of white-out conditions blocking a safe return to the trailhead or camp. Monitor the skies and be prepared to return early if conditions change for the worse.

By following these guidelines, hiking and camping in the mountains (such as our upcoming Taos Bus Trip) can be enjoyed year-round.

THE COMPASS

A PUBLICATION OF THE DALLAS SIERRA CLUB



Vickery Meadow Ministry Speakers for January ICO Meeting.

"This is like the trail we ran on when we escaped, but then we were barefoot."

The goal of our Inner City Outings program is to reach disadvantaged kids, providing them with outdoor experiences they most likely would not have without ICO. ICO volunteers get these kids out on hikes, showing them the beauty of nature and importance of caring about and for our environment. And we try to prepare them for the hike by asking they wear the proper footwear like tennis shoes, not popular flip flops or slip ons.

The above quote was an eye opener. It was said by a youngster from Vickery Meadow Ministries, our ICO's newest partner agency, during a simple day hike at Cedar Ridge Preserve. Many of the kids from Vickery are from families who escaped eastern or western Africa, a place where they are less concerned about nature and natural resources than just staying alive. Now they are in Dallas, thankful for a roof over their head and running water. It made me ask, how do we in ICO and Sierra Club help these kids enjoy and appreciate what reminds them of their escape path, and how can we better understand their emotional needs when experiencing the outdoors.

Stephanie Hoke and John Garripa with Vickery Meadow Ministries will be guest speakers at our Jan. 27th ICO meeting to talk to us about these kids and how ICO can best bring the outdoors to their lives. Everyone is welcome. For more information please sign up on the ICO listserve (option on home page of dallassierraclub.org) or contact us at ico@dallassierraclub.org. And next time you put on your shoes, any kind of shoes, be thankful.



Happy hikers at overlook, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

ICO Ends 2008 with Campout and Service Project

ICO brought 2008 to a close with two especially fun events. More and more kids from the Pegasus School have gotten involved with ICO and besides day hikes, wanted to try camping. So in late fall, amongst the changing leaves and lowering temperatures, ICO leaders traveled north with twelve 9th and 10th grade boys and girls to Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, west of Lawton, OK. With the help of Pegasus Principal Jennifer Hoag and teacher Kim Hoag, the kids successfully met the challenge of putting up tents in the dark, enjoyed a Ranger led orientation about the park, explored the trails, learned outdoor cooking, saw their first buffalo and even heard the elk bugling while falling asleep. And yes, hot chocolate with marshmallows was enjoyed by all!

"This is the best dirtiest adventure I've ever had!"
Kid quote while making flower seed balls at new Trinity River Audubon Center

On a cool December morning kids from Pegasus and ICO volunteers participated in a service outing at the new Trinity River Audubon Center. Ben Jones led the kids on a tour of the new facility, then the kids rolled up their sleeves and made seed ball mixtures so the native flower seeds can be planted without the birds first eating all the seeds. Once the balls were all made, and the outside temperature warmed a bit, the kids pitched in to dig small trenches and plant coral honeysuckle rootings along the Center's entryway fence. A trip back in the spring will be planned so everyone can see the colorful results of their work.



ICO kids and volunteers with all their handmade seed balls

CALENDAR

WWW.DALLASSIERRACLUB.ORG



1/7 • 2/4 First Wednesday. The Executive Committee (or Excom - the elected governing body of the Dallas Sierra Club) and other Club leaders meet to discuss Club business and plan for the future. See www.dallassierraclub.org/calendar for details, or contact the Group Chair.

2/9 Monday before General Meeting. Deadline for submitting material for The Compass. Send to editors@dallassierraclub.org.

1/13 • 2/10 Second Tuesday, 7:00 – 8:30 PM. Sierra Club General Meeting
Come to the Center for Spiritual Living located at International Place Business Center, 4801 Spring Valley Road, Suite 115. Check www.dallassierraclub.org for directions. Come at 6:00 PM for refreshments and socializing and to pick up activity materials.

1/21 • 2/18 Third Wednesday. Outings Committee meeting at 7:00 PM at REI (Mapsco 14Q). Discuss schedules and issues. All outings leaders, future outings leaders, and interested Sierrans are welcome.

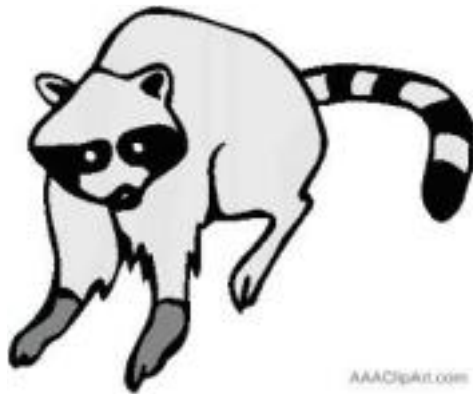
1/27 • 2/24 Fourth Tuesday. Inner City Outings Committee meeting at 7:00 PM at REI (Mapsco 14Q). Guest/New Volunteer Orientation starts at 6:30 pm, meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Inner City Outings is a community outreach program of the Sierra Club that provides outings, such as day hikes and camping, for selected groups of disadvantaged youth. Screening required and training provided for all outing volunteers.

2/25 Fourth Wednesday every other month. Newsletter Mailing Party at 7:00 PM at the Churchill Recreation Center at Hillcrest and Churchill Way (Mapsco 15V). Help sort, bundle and label the newsletter. Just show up.

Fourth Thursday. Conservation Committee meeting at 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Updates on current campaigns, consideration of new issues, and requests for assistance by approved political campaigns. Meeting is upstairs in the meeting room at the Central Market store at Lovers Ln. and Greenville in Dallas, close to the Lovers Lane DART rail station. Come as early as 6:30 to grab some food and eat supper.



The Dallas Sierra Club's general meeting is held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are open to all interested persons. The meetings are held at The Center for Spiritual Living located at International Place Business Center, 4801 Spring Valley Rd., Suite 115. (Mapsco 14L)
Check www.dallassierraclub.org for directions.



Recycling Roundup by Rita Raccoon

It's a brand new year, and the good news is that there are more recycling options than ever in north Texas. Carrollton and Plano join RecycleBank to provide tangible rewards to recycling families. Dallas is placing drop-off recycle collection bins at all libraries and other locations. Also, I have been appointed to the NCTCOG Resource Conservation Council and will provide input to the Time to Recycle subcommittee.

RECENT RECYCLING NEWS - Late Fall 2008

Old Analog TV's On Feb. 17, 2009, all TV stations will transmit digitally. Concerned about what will happen? You have three options for your old analog TV (and its 15 million cousins) - - -

- . Do nothing if you currently have cable or satellite service. The digital changeover only affects programs received through an antenna.
- . Purchase a digital converter. A \$40 coupon is available from the federal government. How do I request a coupon? Go to <https://www.dtv2009.gov>. Between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009, you can request a coupon while supplies last in one of four ways:
 - o Apply online at <https://www.dtv2009.gov>.
 - o Call the Coupon Program toll-free 24-hour automated system 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009).
 - o Mail a coupon application to: PO BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Download a Coupon Application from the website.
 - o Fax a coupon application to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

. Most new TV's are set up to receive the digital signal. If you must purchase a new TV, don't throw away the old one - recycle and prevent the leaking of eight pounds of lead into the environment. Go to earth911.org, type in your zipcode and TV, and get a list of recycling locations in your area. Or hang on to it and be on the lookout for an "e-waste recycling" event. If I hear of any before the next newsletter, I'll post the information here.

Product Stewardship I attended the NCTCOG Resource Conservation Council meeting and heard an interesting presentation about "product stewardship" which focuses on efforts from manufacturers and distributors to work materials back into the plants for recycling or proper disposal, and to "reduce" the amount going into consumer goods. Computer and TV manufacturers are slowly making moves in this direction.

Perhaps current economic conditions will curb our flagrant consumerist behaviors, as we realize that we are not what we own or drive.

RecycleBank

Newsweek featured a company in October with a plan to get consumers really involved in recycling by weighing their recycle bin and giving them redeem-

able points for their recyclable pounds. Points can be redeemed for discounts at stores like CVS or on national brands like Coke. Essentially it's a frequent-flyer program for recyclers. *How cool is that?*

Does it work? In Wilmington, Delaware, recycling participation jumped from 3% to 32% since RecycleBank arrived a year ago. Carrollton and Plano are among the latest cities to join the Recycle Bank team. Another local connection - **Texas Instruments** - makes the radio frequency ID chip for these recycling bins. Check out RecycleBank.com for more information.

Updates

Some good news from Dallas is that the once-a-week garbage pick-up pilot program saw an increase in recycling in the pilot area from 21 pounds per month to 51 pounds and a reduction in landfill garbage from 173 to 143 pounds. The potential sanitation costs savings (and added revenue from recycled material sale) are substantial. In addition, the city is busy placing drop-off recycle collection bins at libraries and other locations - a great addition if you live in an apartment or don't have curbside pick-up. Check greendallas.net for locations near you.

Home Depot to take dead CF lightbulbs

I'm repeating this alert about dead CF bulbs because it's still an urban myth that they're too dangerous. We can finally put to bed the whispering campaign that you shouldn't use compact fluorescent lightbulbs because they contain mercury and are unsafe to throw away. **Worry about those CF bulbs no more!** Home Depot will soon take back the bulbs in all 1,973 of its U.S. stores.

Where can I recycle . . .

Need to know where to recycle in your neighborhood? Go to earth911.org to search by zipcode. Great information about all types of recycling.

Dry Cleaner Hangars Take lots of shirts and suits into the dry cleaners? Have a whole closet-full of wire hangars? Due to rising wire hanger costs, some dry cleaners are providing cardboard holders to collect and recycle those pesky things. Lakeside Cleaners at Knox and Central Expressway has them - get your cleaner to provide them too!

Like all this great recycling information? I knew you would! Don't cut up your newsletter to save all these great hints - visit the Dallas Sierra Club website for current information about city recycling programs and where you can recycle those odd items. Contact the Raccoon-ita with your questions/suggestions for recycling at scifi_chick@juno.com.

Recycling Roundup by Rita Raccoon